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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the proceedings of a European seminar on early childhood education held by the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCCTP). The 40 participants, representing ten European countries, emphasized the social and educational aspects of preschool education. The report includes three papers presented at the seminar. The first paper presents the welcoming remarks of the representative of the Council of Europe and describes some of the activities and projects of the Council of Europe which affect early childhood education. The second paper summarizes the social and educational functions of nursery schools, focusing on some of the problems and goals facing early childhood education. The third paper emphasizes the need for professional education for early childhood teachers, with reference to the situation in Norway. The next section of the report describes preschool education in the 10 countries participating in the seminar. The summary for each country focuses on four basic issues: social and educational functions, teacher education, integration of handicapped children, and working conditions for preschool teachers. The report also includes a draft of recommendations for preschool education that are related to these same four issues. The final section of the paper includes a copy of the program for the seminar and a list of seminar participants. (BD)

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SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Report of a WCOTP European Seminar

Pau, 19 - 24 April 1977

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World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education should be promoted on educational and social grounds, to prepare children for entry into the primary school, not by beginning formal instruction but by developing the child's whole personality, including the mental, physical, aesthetic and emotional facets. Education in the early years is of particular importance as a means of reducing handicaps of a physical, mental or socio-cultural nature. These were amongst the basic conclusions of the 1977 European Seminar held in Pau, France, from April 19 to 24.

In considering the social and educational role of early childhood education the 40 seminar participants from 10 countries emphasised the need for the provision of schools for the young in rural areas just as much as in urban areas, despite the difficulties of gathering children from rural areas into teaching centres.

Turning their attention to the training of early childhood teachers, the seminar participants stressed that "the quality and length of the course must be the same... as for all other teachers in the country" and should take place "in a teacher training institution of university level". During the training period, the student should have "practical experience of working with children (of a young age) without the responsibilities of a teacher". The teacher training programme should ensure that early childhood teachers have special knowledge for "the early detection of physical handicaps and other learning difficulties". They should be trained especially for "creative activities including music, rhyme, mime, psycho-drama, the use of the body for expression, painting and all manual creative skills". Physical education was considered to have an important role since "physical coordination is the basis of early childhood education".

Special attention was given to the integration of handicapped children in early childhood education. Three categories of handicaps were identified - congenital deficiencies (physical, hearing, visual, perceptive), mental retardation and under-privileged family and socio-cultural backgrounds. Segregation of these groups should be avoided whenever possible as "all children must learn to live with others (and) this is particularly important when a child is in any way 'different'". Teachers should be trained in child observation, identification of defects, evaluation of the problem and ability to advise parents. This was an on-going process which should continue throughout the teacher's career. In this aspect of their work, teachers in early childhood education should be assisted by a pedagogical team including specialists of all kinds in the relevant health, social work and educational field.

Special emphasis was placed on the fact that all the members of the "team" should be under the responsibility of one authority - the ministry of education or its equivalent. Governments should be urged to provide the necessary funds for this work: early detection and correction of problems would both minimise future difficulties in schooling and in the long run save considerable sums of money.

As early childhood teachers should have the same training as other teachers, the seminar participants insisted that their salaries and conditions of service should be the same. Within the school, class size should be "not bigger than in primary schools" and ideally smaller. Furthermore, the teachers should have the benefit of trained assistants so that they have only the responsibility of teaching. The special needs of young children in regard to space equipment and facilities were stressed.

Two major presentations were heard and discussed - one by Miss Brigitte Fillon of the Syndicat National des Instituteurs (SNI-PEGC) of France and the other by Miss Kari Lie of the Norsk Laererlag of Norway. The participants saw also the SNI-PEGC film "Soon we shall be six" and visited five nursery schools in Pau.

In the presentation by Brigitte Fillon and in the SNI-PEGC film, emphasis was placed on the fact that all experience at a young age is in fact education and needs to be under the responsibility of a qualified teacher. Miss Fillon noted the work of crèches or day nurseries and day reception centres but considered that "only the nursery schools are really capable of meeting the child's needs and this is where the children should be". These schools should be "an instrument of social justice, essential if education is to be truly democratic".

Miss Fillon then dealt with the educational function of the nursery school. SNI-PEGC policy calls for nursery schools to be open to all from the age of two years. She outlined the basic objectives of the nursery school - to identify handicaps, to cultivate the growing capacity for reason and creativity, to awaken motor responses, to find mental and affective equilibrium, to offer a broad range of experiences. Miss Fillon stressed that "it is only too true to say that for many children success or failure is decided at this age". She believed that "it surely is necessary to point out that faulty mastery of speech or insufficient development of motor and mental activity will jeopardise the later mastery of the complicated mechanisms of reading or arithmetic, that the awakening of the senses and the personality pre-conditions the individual's whole future life". Thus SNI-PEGC "has fought, and will fight for the defence and strengthening of the nursery school, for the promotion and not the dilution of its educational purpose".

The film 'Soon we shall be six", Miss Fillon explained, has been produced by SNI-PEGC to inform the public as to the real function and purpose of the nursery school. It was done at a time when the Secretary of State for Nursery Schools, Ms. Lesur, had proposed that children should have alternating periods of educational and leisure activities - the children being under the care of "school assistants" whilst the teacher devoted his or her time to small groups of pupils. In the view of SNI-PEGC this meant that "most of the school day would be taken up in mere child-minding, with the teacher from time to time dispensing a little education". SNI-PEGC could not accept this prospect of "disjointed teaching" and set out to inform parents and awaken them and public opinion of the dangers of the project. Miss Fillon added that "under the pressure of our union, Ms. Lesur's project was withdrawn" but the information campaign continues.

Miss Kari Lie, Vice President of the Norsk Laererlag of Norway, focused attention on "Teacher education for early childhood teachers".

Reflecting the views of her organisation, Miss Lie felt that "as a fundamental principle... this training school be primarily of a vocational character, i.e. its content should be clearly directed towards the professional role of the early childhood teacher".

Early childhood education was defined in the Norwegian law as "a pedagogically organised activity in daytime for children below school age, i.e. from 0 - 7 years". However, in the view of the Norwegian Teachers' Association "the bill (on which the law is based) was marked by a tendency to see the kindergarten as a social relief measure and a socio-political agent based on financial and labour market considerations". It appeared to the Association that the supervisory function of the kindergarten had been given priority over its pedagogical tasks - "a quantitative rather than a qualitative development of the kindergarten".

Miss Lie noted that the early childhood teacher is part of a staff consisting of persons with very different educational backgrounds - nurses with eight months' training, assistants with no training at all, students working in the kindergarten to get the necessary practice required for admission to various careers. In many cases the pre-school teacher will be the only one with an educational background. In Miss Lie's view "this requires very special abilities to cooperate and administer and must have consequences for the content of the education and training of the teacher".

Miss Lie presented as major features of the training programme that the future teacher should:

- understand the individual child, his/her behaviour and development and possible symptoms of deficient development and disease;
- understand the psychological processes active in the intercourse between children and between children and adults;
- build up a stimulating social and cultural environment in accordance with children's requirements and capabilities with a view to ensuring the well-being and safety of the individual child;
- promote cooperation with the children's parents and with colleagues and authorities in the kindergarten field.

Noting that in Norway, the number of places for the training of pre-school teachers is rising as the number of primary teacher students falls, Miss Lie stressed that the staff of the teachers' colleges must receive compulsory in-service training before starting to teach early childhood teacher students. In the view of the organisation, this is essential if early childhood teacher training is to "preserve its special characteristics irrespective of the fact that the training takes place at the ordinary college of education". On the other hand, "as far as the (other) teacher students are concerned, their contact with pre-school teacher training should enable them to get a better understanding of the social aspect of all educational work".

The work of the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe in the field of early childhood educati[illegible]s outlined by Wolfgang Rössle. He referred to the role played by [illegible]TP and IFTA representatives in meetings organised by the Council and stressed the benefits to the Council of discussions with teachers such as those at the Pau Seminar. Appreciation was expressed by the seminar session chairman, René Labes, at the cooperation of the Council, in the promotion of the seminar in the form of documentation and of financial assistance.

At the close of the Seminar, warm appreciation was expressed on behalf of all participants by the Chairman of the WCOTP European Committee, Lars-Erik Klason, for the excellent seminar arrangements made by the Syndicat National des Instituteurs (SNI-PEGC) and its local section in Pau and for the hospitality at the farewell dinner given by the SNI-PEGC, the Syndicat National des Enseignements de Second Degré and the Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Technique (SNET-AA)

John M. Thompson
Secretary General

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

Mr. Wolfgang Rösle
Representative of the
Council of Europe

1. In my capacity as representative of the Council of Europe, I should like first to express my appreciation for the continuing co-operation that has been established between the WCOTP and the Council of Europe on educational matters. The Council of Europe welcomes the presence of WCOTP delegates at its meetings and is glad to have the views of an organisation whose practical experience in the field of education is of particular interest to it. Futhermore, the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, and its Secretary-General in particular, greatly appreciate having this possibility to keep informed about the activities of the WCOTP, and to be invited to send an observer to follow its deliberations. For the Council of Cultural Cooperation (CCC) and its Committee for General and Technical Education, this co-operation has become an important source of inspiration and I am convinced that these contacts are mutually beneficial.

2. Before speaking of the activities of the Council of Europe that are directly linked to the theme of this seminar, I should like briefly to outline the matters of current concern to us and which are included in our organisation's programme of work. I shall mention only those projects that bear on school education and that are carried out under the responsibility of the Committee for General and Technical Education, which is one of the standing committees of the Council for Cultural Cooperation.

In the context of the Council of Europe's middle-term plan, the activities of the C.G.T.E. are focussed on certain priority topics, one of which is pre-school education. In addition, the problems of the 16-19 age group are the subject of a complex project designed to improve educational systems in the second cycle of secondary education (study of new structures and options - independent work by the pupil - participation in teaching).

A third project - technical and vocational education - is mainly devoted to the various aspects of professional mobility and to possibilities for setting up a system of capitalizable units (which would have the advantage of fostering the link-up with continuous training). An important project that has recently got under way is a study of the problems of schooling for children of migrant workers and, in particular, training of teachers for host countries. In this connexion, the Council of Europe is currently preparing information files on the cultures, civilizations and education systems of countries of emigration and of immigration.

As regards modern languages, the Council of Europe is currently engaged in formulating language learning concepts, based on a "threshold level" which will be adapted to the conditions of compulsory school education.

Another item in the work programme concerns European co-production of teaching media. More than 150 films and other teaching media designed for teacher training and for the teaching of geography, physics and biology have been prepared so far. I should also like to mention the C.C.C.

fellowship system, which each year enables some 350 educators from the 22 member States of the C.C.C. to participate in short refresher courses organized in an evergrowing number of host countries.

3. Turning to the topic of pre-school education, this has been within the field of activity of the Council of Europe since 1969, when the Ministers of Education adopted a resolution on equal opportunities in education. It was in response to that resolution that in 1970, at Venice, the Council of Europe organised an initial symposium on the objectives, methods and problems of pre-school education. An inventory was drawn up and current trends were analyzed. The results established the bases on which subsequent work could proceed.

A second symposium was held in 1973, at Leyden (Netherlands), on the training of teaching personnel for pre-school education. The conclusions underlined, in particular, the social aspect of pre-school education and its consequences for teacher training. In order to develop and improve relations between pre-school education and primary education, it was recommended that future teachers should receive part of their practicial training in pre-school establishments, and vice versa. It was stated that, in developing the personality of the child as an individual, recourse should be had to specialists in all matters bearing on the life of young children (i.e. teachers, sociologists, doctors, social workers, architects, parents, etc...).

4. In 1975 a three-year project was established and brought into operation with the following priority topics:

(a) the compensatory role of pre-school education;
(b) pre-school education in regions of low population density;
(c) pre-school education of migrants' children;
(d) co-operation between parents, the pre-school system and the community;
(e) the link-up between pre-school education and primary education.

In connexion with the compensatory role of pre-school education, four case-studies have been made, as follows:

- children of families in difficulty from the human aspect (Dell'Acqua);
- children of families underprivileged from the socio-cultural and economic aspect (de Coster);
- children with multiple physical handicaps (congenital or acquired, preceptual or motor) (Wolfgart);
- mentally retarded children (Watson).

This last study has been distributed to you by way of example. A synthesis study on practical applications of the conclusions of these four reports will likewise be available shortly (Vejleskov). Another major theme of the project is co-operation between parents, the pre-schooling system and the community. There again, four case-studies were undertaken following a meeting of experts in 1976 which identified the themes to be developed or the pilot experiments to be analyzed. We hope to have a synthesis report on these matters by

autumn 1977.

In conclusion, the last theme of the pre-schooling project - "the link-up between pre-school education and primary education - has been examined on two occasions:

a) at a Symposium held at Versailles in 1975, at which the WCOTP was represented by Miss Jones, and

b) at a Symposium in March 1977 at Bournemouth, in which Miss Jones and Miss Lie participated.

You all know the conclusions of the Symposium of Versailles, and you also have before you a provisional version of the Bournemouth conclusions which confirm and supplement those of Versailles. Some of the recommendations of this latter Symposium will have direct reporcussions on the training of teachers, their professional qualifications and their attitudes.

5. Documentation, of significance in both volume and quality, on various aspects of pre-school education in Europe has been assembled and published in order to afford practical and efficacious aid to the member countries. The pre-school education project, in its present form, should be completed by the end of 1977. We hope to be able to make the results of this work available to everyone concerned - teachers, teacher training personnel, persons with planning responsibilities in the field of education, and parents - at the beginning of 1978. An internationally well-known expert is to undertake analysis and consideration of pre-school education, so as to take stock of the present position and outline possible future developments in Western Europe.

It would be important for the Council of Europe to be better acquainted with the views of teachers on the numerous recommendations that ought to be represented to the broadest possible audience, and which for that reason should be as practical and as methodical as possible.

It is this spirit, I can assure you, that the reflections of the WCOTP during this Seminar will be examined by our Co-ordination Group for pre-school education and primary education and by our Committee for General and Technical Education.

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Miss Brigitte Fillon
SNI-PEGC, France

I The social function of the nursery school

1. The record

The increase in the number of women taking up employment - an irreversible trend - since the 1950s has been phenomenal. Obviously it has been accompanied by a growing demand for child-minding facilities: the proportion of women aged between 25 and 35 at work, most of them mothers of young children, had risen to 50 per cent by 1965 and 62.4 per cent in 1974

It follows that society must find the means to take responsibility for children at ever younger ages.

In 10 years, the enrolment ratio for children between 2 and 3 years old has risen from 9 to 27 per cent.

The problem of how to care for them cannot be solved without asking the question: what is best for the child?

Changes in the family situation should not and must not be to the detriment of educational needs.

New educational needs are created: how can they be met? How can society best respond to the needs of the children whose mothers are at work?

2. What are the existing facilities

The crèches or day nurseries take children up to the age of 3 and as they are private establishments - perhaps run by a local authority or organisation, a works committee, etc. - they are expensive. In any case there are very few in the larger cities and they are quite unable to meet the demand.

Day reception centres will look after children outside school hours: they may be run in nursery school premises or in social or leisure centres, etc. They are usually controlled by local authorities and the people in charge are municipal employees.

The children in the centres or nursery schools are away from their homes for long hours, and it may well be asked whether this is for their good. It is really better to plan the youngsters' day - and what a day, from 7 in the morning till 7 at night or even longer - according to their parents' daily programme, or ought their mothers' work to be subordinated to the children's needs?

Only the Nursery Schools are really capable of meeting the child's needs, and this is where the children should be. In theory, they are open to all, a point which will call for further consideration later. If the Nursery Schools were in a position fully to play their role, they would be an instrument of social justice, essential if education is to be truly democratic.

After stating the problem, the care of young children, in its quantitative aspect (the social function of the nursery school), it remains to define its place in education, the role and scope of the establishment where the process of education begins.

II The educational function of the nursery school

The child's first years are determinant. All should be to benefit from their earliest years from an education which will promote their physical, mental and affective development.

This is why the SNI-PEGC demands, has always demanded and always will demand, that the Nursery School should be open as a RIGHT to all.

We, as a union, are convinced of the inestimable importance of the educational role of the nursery school : in our "Basic School" project it is given its full weight and significance, as the foundation stone of the whole educational system.

Democracy in education and equality of opportunity are not for us empty words. Democracy in education for us means letting all children develop to the maximum all their potential, it means giving them all the right to education, the dorway to culture. And where can this right begin, if not in the nursery school!

Education is something that goes on all the time.

Everything that happens is a stimulant to the awakening of the senses and the flowering of personality.

All early experience contributes to the preparation for the skill-learning which comes in the primary school. Everything in the child's first contacts outside the family, in an environment adapted to his capacity and each to his measure, is a source of effort and therefore of education - learning.

Accepting the responsibility for a young child's education means also looking out for and recognising any handicap he may have at the earliest possible age : this too is part of the teacher's discreet and continuing attention and instruction.

Accepting the responsibility for a young child's education means cultivating the young capacity for reason and creativity with which we are all born : and this can be developed to the maximum at the nursery school age, in a full environment compensating for impersonal blocks of buildings or a deprived home.

Accepting the responsibility for a young child's education means starting from the child's natural capacity and awakening his motor responses, physical development and harmonious maturation.

Accepting the responsibility for a young child's education means giving him the opportunity to find his mental and affective equilibrium, vital for his future, and which he can find only in the harmony of the small school community.

Accepting the responsibility for a young child's education means offering him a broad range of experience in the many fields open to him in the nursery school, the preparation for his school life to come, for life itself.

If equality of opportunity is not to be a mere empty phrase, if it is to be a reality, it cannot too often be repeated that everything begins in the nursery school.

It is only too true to say that for many children success or failure is decided at this age. What in fact happens when the child starts the preparatory class - the first year in the primary school? Suddenly he has to learn how to understand symbols, how to reason, how to recognise the keys to the combination lock of learning. Suddenly he is faced with a world without limits: the letters he has to learn for reading and writing and all that that opens before him, the numbers and mathematical relations with which he can proceed to unimaginable calculations and discoveries. And with what enthusiasm! This is the decisive moment to be seized by his teachers in the preparatory class, and for which all that came before was preparation. All his years at the nursery school contribute to the indispensable maturation that he needs to approach his skill learning in confidence and calm.

It surely is unnecessary to point out that faulty mastery of speech or insufficient development of motor and mental activity will jeopardise the later mastery of the complicated mechanisms of reading or arithmetic, that the awakening of the senses and the personality preconditions the individual's whole future life?

For the Nursery School to be the springboard for future intellectual achievement and a way to the balanced development of personality is the object that for more than half a century devoted teachers have striven, often under difficult conditions, always seeking new ways to progress in this moving field.

And this is what the whole SNI-PEGC has fought and will fight for, the defence and strengthening of the nursery school, for the promotion and not the dilution of its educational purpose; we do not deny its social function but can never accept its predominance against the indispensable role it has in the whole educational system..

III Why a film about the nursery school?

On 14 September 1974, the Secretary of State for Nursery Schools, Mrs Lesur, outlined her proposed reform of the nursery school system.

The feature of this project was to reduce the teacher's contribution to its educative role, ignoring completely the need to reduce class numbers (then 50 per class, according to the letter of the regulations). Mrs. Lesur's argument was that the child needed alternating periods of educational and leisure activities, and she proposed to leave the children in the care of "school assistants" while the teacher devoted her time to small groups of pupils. So that most of the school day would be taken up in mere child-minding, with the teacher from time to time dispensing a little education.

Could this be called "education"?

The nursery school teachers and the Union as a whole could not accept this prospect of disjointed teaching, the programming of educational activity time and child-minding time : the principle of the Basic School sponsored by SNI-PEGC is that education must be global and continuous : there cannot be a school where some moments are educational and others are not.

The SNI therefore reacted at once and on the basis of its determination to oppose any dilution of the nursery school principle set out to inform parents and awaken them and public opinion to the dangers of a project that merely evaded the real problem : that of class size and working conditions.

Under the pressure of our union, Mrs Lesur's project was withdrawn, but our information campaign to defend and promote the Nursery School continues with the showing of our film, "Soon we shall be six".

This film, which you are about to see, was taken in eight nursery schools; its purpose is to show, simply and truthfully, what the Nursery Schools of France are really like, in 1975, bringing out not only the difficulties due to working conditions but also its undeniable educational role.

The film is not an end in itself; its purpose is to inform, and, I hope, to be the starting point for fruitful discussion.

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS

Ms. Kari Lie, Vice-President
Norsk Lærerlag, Norway

The Place in the Organization of Early Childhood Teachers.

Before starting on my subject I find it natural to mention that the Norwegian Teachers' Association (Norsk Lærerlag) is a professional organization for teachers as well as for pre-school teachers. The early childhood teachers have not organized themselves in any other organization. Out of the approximately 36 500 members of the Norwegian Teachers' Association slightly above 3000 are today pre-school teachers. However, the ratio is about to change. This is due to the fact that while the demand for teachers only shows a very slight increase, the demand for pre-school teachers is subject to a marked increase due to an expansion in the establishment of kindergartens.

Since early childhood teachers constitute a member group in the Norwegian Teachers' Association, it has become an important task for the association to engage in problems concerning the purpose and content of the kindergarten and the training of personnel for this activity.

In this connection I would mention that in Norway children start school in the year in which they reach the age of 7. The kindergarten is, therefore, intended for children between 0 and 7 years.

In the present paper I shall primarily concentrate on the education and training of pre-school teachers. As a fundamental principle we think that this training should primarily be of a vocational character, i.e. its content should be clearly directed towards the professional role of the early childhood teacher.

Since training and professional role are so closely connected I would like to say a few words about the activities in the kindergarten, which is the pre-school teacher's most important area of work.

Aims and Content of the Kindergarten

The first Norwegian law on kindergartens was passed by The Storting (Parliament) in 1975. Paragraph 1 stipulates that the purpose of the law is thatchildren should be provided with possibilities of development and activity in close understanding and cooperation with their homes. According to its definition the kindergarten is a pedagogically organized activity in daytime for children below school age, i.e. from 0 - 7 years, and for children on a corresponding level of maturity. It is emphasized that the quality of the educational content of the kindergarten will determine if the kindergarten is to hamper or to promote the development of the child at the various age levels. The quality of the pedagogical content will depend on the personnel working in the kindergarten and on the training they have received. The pre-school teacher is thus assigned a very central and responsible role and is an important guarantee of the pedagogical quality of the kindergarten.

The bill was worked out on the basis of the preparatory work of a public committee. The committee submitted its recommendations in 1972. The committee characterized the kindergarten as an educational offer to parents, a socio-political agent and a social relief measure, and considered that a coherent educational programme from kindergarten to school should be aimed at.

In its comments on the committee report the Norwegian Teachers' Association expressed the view that the kindergarten should primarily be an educational offer to children below school age.

Although the Bill defined the kindergarten as a pedagogically organized establishment, this had little influence on the further elaboration and content of the law. In the opinion of the Norwegian Teachers' Association the Bill was marked by a tendency to see the kindergarten as a social relief measure and a socio-political agent based on financial and labour market considerations. It appeared that the supervisory function of the kindergarten had been given priority over its pedagogical tasks. Therefore, the Norwegian Teachers' Association took the view that the bill belonged in fact to our social legislation. We rejected the proposal on grounds of principle and submitted an earnest request to the Storting that the law should be re-written so that the pedagogical purpose of the kindergarten would come out clearly. Parliament gave no attention to the observations of our association. The political will in the Storting favoured a quantitative rather than a qualitative development of the kindergarten.

The result is that for the kindergartens and early childhood teachers the situation is at present muddled and unsatisfactory. The Norwegian Teachers' Association considers it an important task to work for a development in a more pedagogic direction. At all events it will remain true that children's benefit from their stay in a kindergarten depends on the pedagogical quality of the establishment and on the education and training which the pre-school teachers receive.

Professional Role of the Pre-school Teacher

An important aspect of the activity in the kindergarten will consist in building up a social environment and creating forms of being together which, to the greatest possible extent, promote the development, well-being, safety and health of the children.

In its activities the kindergarten should aim at furthering a comprehensive development of the children's personalities. The children should therefore meet experiences connected with nature, and with literature, art, religion and other fields of life, and they should be encouraged to use varied forms of expression and activity.

In addition to his/her direct work with children and their environment in the kindergarten, the pre-school teacher will also be faced with a number of tasks of a cooperative nature. He must cooperate with parents and colleagues in the kindergarten and with the authorities within the health, social and school sectors.

In this connection I would emphasize that the pre-school teacher is part of a staff consisting of persons with very different educational backgrounds. There may be children's nurses with 8 months' training, assistants with no

training at all, students working in the kindergarten to get the necessary practice required for admission to various careers, and there may be kitchen personnel and a caretaker. In many cases the pre-school teacher will be the only one with an educational background, and he/she will always be the leader of the institution and its personnel. This requires very special abilities to co-operate and administer and must have consequences for the content of the education and training of the teacher.

The early childhood teacher is thus in a situation which differs widely from that of the school teacher, who is part of a staff where everybody has received educational training.

The pre-school teacher will have to interpret his duties on the basis of a very wide notion of the concept of education - and main emphasis must lie on environment work. Taken in its widest sense the task of the pre-school teacher is to participate in the general effort to improve the condition of children in our society. Within this context the training of the pre-school teacher may be seen as part of a continuous development of the kindergarten.

Act Concerning the Training of Teachers - including pre-school teachers

Up to the year 1973 we had no legislative stipulations for the training of pre-school teachers, and training was offered at separate institutions. Minimum requirement for admission was lower secondary school or corresponding schooling, 6 months' domestic science college, 6 months' training as a children's nurse and 12 months' practical work with children. The training lasted two years.

A new Act concerning the training of teachers was adopted by the Storting in 1973. The education and training of pre-school teachers was now incorporated in the act which endeavours to establish equality between the training of pre-school teachers and that of teachers. To be admitted to either line of study students must have completed upper secondary school, and both lines take three years. According to the new law all teachers' colleges can provide training of pre-school teachers. Institutions which had hitherto provided such training were brought under the law and described as colleges of education. Training of pre-school teachers is now provided at 16 of our total of 27 colleges of education.

Regulations and Curriculum for Training of Pre-School Teachers

Guidelines and aims

In November 1975 a public committee presented regulations and curriculum for the training of pre-school teachers. The document also specified the aims of the training.

Since the kindergarten is to lay emphasis on furthering a comprehensive development of the child's personality, the training of pre-school teachers must be comprehensive and interdisciplinary. The programme will therefore comprise a wide range of subjects and areas directed towards the various tasks which the teacher will subsequently be faced with. Theoretical and practical training will go together. The training of pre-school teachers should be made a "goal-directed" study through coordination of learning material from various subjects and fields with a view to making students qualified for the role of pre-school teacher and through combination of practical training with

subject - didactic valuations.

Pre-school teacher training must be based on the values and the cultural foundations on which our society and our school system have been built. The study should give increased knowledge and understanding of the central values in our cultural tradition and provide, at the same time, knowledge of the value conflicts and the conflicts of interest seen in today's society.

The curriculum will comprise a discussion and clarification of the values and cultural basis of the cultural majority in our country, but the syllabus should also deal with problems concerning specific features of language, culture and religion of minority groups. It will be necessary to include in the curriculum special knowledge of the situation of immigrant children.

The transfer of the cultural traditions and the basic religious and ethical values on which our society is built has always been a primary responsibility of the homes where small children are concerned. The pre-school teacher's duty will be to assist parents in their educational efforts on the basis of respect for the philosophy and the view of society which they represent. The training should therefore promote understanding of the responsibility the pre-school teacher should feel towards the children's homes.

In his work the pre-school teacher will meet children of unequal capacity for intercourse with other children. Limitations occur particularly in case of children having various kinds of functional handicaps. Problems of special education should therefore be discussed in connection with many of the subjects and themes included in the training programme for pre-school teachers. The teaching programme and the social and cultural life existing at the individual college should help students in their own personal development and in the confirmation of their personal values. One of the aims of the training is to provide increased self-knowledge, with a special view to facilitating future situations of being together with children and colleagues in the kindergarten. The studies should develop interest in and understanding of others and an ability to cooperate.

The aims of pre-school teacher training may be summarized as follows:

The training programme should aim at creating a pedagogical, professional, cultural and social environment furthering the personal growth of the students and giving them an opportunity to acquire attitudes, knowledge, insight and competence in order that they may be prepared to:

- actively contribute to the realization of the aims of the kindergarten;
- understand the individual child, his/her behaviour and development and possible symptoms of deficient development and disease;
- understand the psychological processes active in the intercourse between children and between children and adults;
- build up a stimulating social and cultural environment in accordance with children's requirements and capabilities with a view to ensuring the well-being and safety of the individual child;

- promote cooperation with the children's parents and with colleagues and authorities in the kindergarten field;

- appraise his own task and the function of the kindergarten under changing circumstances and within a larger cultural context;

- follow the development of children's environment in home, kindergarten, school and social life at large and take the initiative to participate in experimental and development work;

- develop an open and independent professional/ethical attitude with respect for the child and his individual peculiarity.

Content, structure and organization

According to the regulations and curriculum the training programme should comprise educational theory and practice as well as subject-didactic studies adapted for work in the kindergarten. The theoretical part should consist of a basic general programme and a main subject or field.

Work with children of pre-school age will be a sort of general social environment work. The content of a theoretical and practical study programme should be determined by this conception of pedagogical work. If this point of departure is kept in view, the various parts of the programme - educational theory and practice, didactics methodology, subject and theme studies - may be interwoven, and study programmes may therefore cut across traditional borderlines between subjects or disciplines.

The theoretical studies should impart to the students increased knowledge, ability and insight in a relatively large area, but this part of the training should also be so organized as to make it possible for the students to concentrate on and study in depth a limited subject area. For all subjects and areas the study programme should be based on the level of knowledge which is a condition for admission to the colleges of education.

The Norwegian Teachers' Association has stated that it considers educational theory and practice to be so important parts of the training programme that there should be reason to devote half of the study time to that component. We further think that half of the time reserved for the educational component should be utilized for practice in a kindergarten with a pre-school teacher as adviser. To allow theoretical studies to be as comprehensive as possible in-depth study of a particular subject should not take more than six months.

The Regulations and Curriculum suggest that the theoretical subjects should include religion, ethics, Norwegian, sociology, science, art, music, drama, physical training, and that approximately equal weight should be given to each.

The Norwegian Teachers' Association holds the view that the individual subjects should be given a more differentiated emphasis, and we have suggested that Norwegian, music, art and sociology should receive more weight than the others. As a consequence of the fact that a growing number of children with functional handicaps are admitted in the kindergartens we have also advocated that theory and practice of special education should be included in the basic

training programme as a compulsory element of the curriculum.

Experience with Pre-school Teacher Training at Colleges of Education

I have already mentioned that according to the 1973 Act concerning the training of teachers pre-school teacher training is now one of the branches of training offered to students at the colleges of education. This decree coincided with a trend to the effect that the demand for primary school teachers was about to be covered. As a result of this the enrolment of teacher students was gradully considerably reduced. At the same time available capacity - educators as well as student openings - was utilized for the training of pre-school teachers.

The Norwegian Teachers' Association is concerned at this development since a result may be that pre-school teacher training becomes too strongly influenced by teacher training. The Norwegian Teachers' Association has held out that pre-school teacher training should preserve its special characteristics irrespective of the fact that the training takes place at the ordinary colleges of education.

The arrangement has now been running for a couple of years, and we have collected various observations as to how it functions. These observations will be presented in the following:

Observations of principle

Training of teachers and pre-school teachers at one and the same educational institution is important for students' understanding of the continuity in the development and education of the child.

Teachers of all categories are in need of extended knowledge of development psychology and of pedagogical methods employed at age levels bordering on the level at which they are working themselves.

The student groups are able to get first-hand insight into each other's field of work, especially if a separate institution for practical training is attached to the college.

The basis for cooperation between teacher groups should preferably be laid in the course of the training period.

A common institution of training gives a chance of joint planning and joint treatment of themes within the individual subjects taught. This could provide experience of common basis and common needs of knowledge and have an enriching effect on all parties concerned.

Drawbacks and problems in connection with common institutions of training

Pre-school teacher training constitutes a foreign body at the established teachers' colleges. The teaching staff is not always motivated for receiving it. The training of pre-school teacher students may be felt as a forced duty which the teachers have to take on by turns. This leaves them no possibility to concentrate on the specific problems which the use of their subject in a pre-school context will entail. This being so the students may feel that the teaching is of little relevance for their future work.

In general it must be taken for granted that the teaching staff of the teachers' college will be responsible for the training of pre-school teacher students as well as of teacher students. This may provide excellent possibilities for developing a unified view of children's education and learning all through the years of growth. But an important condition for this to happen is that the teacher educators receive compulsory in-service training before starting to teach early childhood teacher students. Part of this in-service training must consist in work in a kindergarten in order that the educators may acquaint themselves with the future area of work of their students. Up to now no such courses have been arranged in Norway - except a few short, general courses of 4-5 days' duration when pre-school teacher training has been introduced at "new" teachers' colleges. Claims for courses are being asserted with increasing vigour.

An important condition for getting a qualitatively satisfactory training of early childhood teachers at the teachers' colleges is, in addition, that specific teacher teams are entrusted with that training. Such teams will more easily be able to acquaint themselves with the specific problems of pre-school teacher training and to identify with them.

Present practice with "compulsory service" in pre-school teacher training contributes to preserve the "low status" mark of the training - a feeling to which students have given vent in a number of cases. This in turn may contribute to increased opposition between pre-school teachers and teachers instead of reducing it.

This problem seems to apply particularly to the teachers of special subjects while in many cases the lecturers of pedagogics and educational psychology have found that teaching pre-school teachers constitutes a bigger and more exciting challenge than teaching teacher students.

If it is desired to develop the possibilities of increased understanding and cooperation which ought to exist in the common training institutions, it is important that the teaching staff should be made aware that such a development does not seem to come of itself.

Pre-school teacher students and teachers with a pre-school background will frequently find that they and their field of work are not very highly estimated and that they are treated with a certain amount of condescension. A natural reaction is that they keep apart from the others upholding rather obstinately the special character of the training of pre-school teachers and how different it is from all other kinds of teacher training. A defensive position like this is likely to blind both parties to common fields and common interests.

A positive integration of pre-school teacher training at the colleges of education demands a deliberate preparation of attitudes among the teaching staff. In this work an important role is held by the college management.

Advantages and prospects of common institutions of training

Common institutions of training will contribute to emphasizing that pre-school teacher training is pedagogical training and the profession a pedagogical profession.

The courses of further education offered at teachers' colleges will provide increased possibilities of further education even for pre-school teachers. It is important, therefore, to influence these courses in order that their content be made relevant for pre-school teachers.

In Norway the teacher training colleges have benefited from better material conditions than the training institutions for pre-school teachers. This applies both to space, special rooms, audio-visual aids, library etc. Under the new arrangement these resources will also be available to pre-school teacher training.

Those of the teachers at the colleges of education who have taken a special interest in pre-school teacher training and in the possibilities afforded to their own teaching subject in pre-school teacher training have added inspiration and incentives to the training and have contributed to reducing the danger of isolation. It looks in fact as if pre-school teacher training has given these teachers a new understanding of the general importance of their own teaching subject for the development of children.

As far as the teacher students are concerned, their contact with pre-school teacher training should enable them to get a better understanding of the social aspect of all educational work.

AUSTRIA : Verband der Professoren Österreichs

1. In our opinion, early childhood education has a dual function. There is a general educational function : preparation for entry into elementary school for as many children as possible; in addition, it helps with the development of those children who are old enough (i.e. older than six) to attend elementary school but are still not sufficiently mature for first grade. For such children, we have set up pre-school classes which are institutionally linked to an elementary school and are conducted by the teachers of that same school. For normally developed children who are not yet of school age (ages 4 to 6), there are kindergartens which employ men and women specially trained in the care and upbringing of children

The social function of early childhood education is reflected in the fact that we offer children of 4-6 years of age whose parents are working, the possibility of spending the morning and afternoon (till about 5 p.m.) in meaningful occupation under the supervision of trained personnel. All such arrangements are optional and must be paid for.

2. Kindergarten staff are trained in specialized institutions (3-year course). In preparation for work in pre-school classes, elementary school teachers attend special courses as part of their teacher-training for elementary teaching.

3. School experiments are being conducted with a view to determining which handicapped children can be integrated.

4. There are 34-36 hours of work per week. In general the vacation period is 6 weeks long. As such staff come under the Länder (provinces) and not under the Federal Government, the regulations governing working conditions are not uniform.

COUNTRY REPORTS
ON
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

DENMARK: Danmarks Laererforening

1) In most Danish communities the children are offered admission to nursery school classes during the school -year prior to the start of compulsory education

In Denmark the education of the nursery school class child is looked upon as a social as well as an educational matter.

Through the years both psychologists and other research workers have emphasized the importance of pre-school children being together with other children of the same age group.

Investigations into the linguistic development of children has a very stimulating effect on this development. The year spent in the nursery school class has a pedagogical aim the purpose of which being upon the whole the same as that of the primary school. The nursery school class does not have the same informative function as the "real" school. More attention is being paid to the linguistic and motoric learning, while at the same time the children are getting used to school environment and school life.

The social and the educational aspects are melted together into a pedagogic synthesis which is also reflected in the training of the teacher in the nursery school class. The educational requirements are the same as those applying to kindergarten teachers.

2) The training for kindergarten teacher cannot begin till the age of 18. The training lasts 3 years and is divided into almost equal parts of manual and theoretical sybjects and practical work. As examples of manual subjects, workshop-subjects, should be mentioned weaving, fabric-, wood-, and metal-works, and clay-modelling. From the theoretical subject group pedagogy, psychology, and social-psychology should be mentioned together with an overall teaching of Danish and science.

As mentioned before the student-teachers are also being sent out to practice in nursery schools (kindergartens).

The training is finished by an examination in the pedagogical and psychologic major subjects. The teachers in the subjects in question examine the students together with 3 external examiners. Apart from the finishing examination, the student-teachers also have to prepare a report on one of the special subjects from the theoretical subject group.

Upon the wole the training for kindergarten (nursery school) teacher is based upon an alteration of practical experiences, projects and theory.

During recent years experiments have been made with a stronger integration of handicapped children in the nursery school classes. Such integration, however, affects the fixing of salaries and allowances, as more time and other functions are called for in specific situations and in the practical arrangements.

Various questions in connection with the transfer of the administration of the care of the mentally deficient and the handicapped are currently being solved.

4) A nursery school class teacher works 30 hours per week and is moreover being paid for one hour's work with the clearing-away of teaching materials.

Apart from the work in the nursery school class the teacher must take part in the parent/school work and is under an obligation to appear at the meetings of the teachers' council, and is moreover obliged to take up various other functions.

Nursery school class teachers can be permanently appointed civil servants or they may be appointed for one year at a time.

Re.: Early childhood education - the 7 - 10 years old children.

The first years of primary school are often called the "in-schooling-period".

1) During the in-schooling period great importance is attached to the fundamental subjects Danish and Mathematics together with the basic social functions and motoric learning.

This period is characterized by a development of the social learning from kindergarten (nursery school) and from the nursery school class, to which must be added that during the in-schooling period the informative function is the main thing.

2) All through primary school the teaching is conducted by teachers with an education authorizing them to teach 1st to 10th classes.

Requirements for admission to a teachers' training college are examination for school-leaving certificate (General Certificate) or the new "Higher Preparation Examination". The studies at the training college last from three and a half to four years and are divided up

into one year of basic training for all students, after which period the students choose two major sunjects. Parallel to this, there is a pedagogic/psychologic group of subjects common to all students. The training is finished by an examination in all subjects. In shorter periods during the training, the students are practicing in the primary school. This practical training can be either period practice or bloc practice, for instance of 3 weeks duration.

3) As described in the paper concerning the nursery school classes, several attempts have also been made in the primary school with integration of handicapped pupils. And as mentioned before, we have at the moment a series of unclarified questions in connection with the transfer of the care for the mentally deficient and the handicapped from January 1979 or 1980.

The integration of handicapped pupils in the public school has been steadily growing during recent years.

4) Teachers in the public (primary) school teach 27 hours per week and in addition to this comes their obligation to prepare and revise the lessons. Moreover they are obliged to take part in the parent/school work, the work in the teachers' council and the so-called "pedagogic days".

Most teachers are permanently appointed civil servants, but the appointment may also be less permanent. Graduation from a Danish teachers' training college is a must in order to obtain permanent employment in the Danish public school.

Early childhood education in England and Wales takes place in Nursery schools and classes which cater for children between 2 and 5 years of age. Attendance at Nursery schools and classes is voluntary and may be on a full-time or part-time basis.

In 1975, 531,600 children under five years old were in school. Compulsory education begins at the age of five years.

In addition to the children who are in Nursery school, there are other pre-school children in voluntary pre-school play groups, usually set up by and staffed by mothers, and there are some residential Nurseries for children in need from birth onwards and some day nurseries for children up to three years of age, particularly in industrial areas. Many children of working mothers spend their days in the care of child-minders.

1. Early childhood education has both a social and educational function and it is difficult to separate the two. It has an educational function since it develops the child's confidence in his relationships with adults and with the peers, so that he is motivated to learn, particularly if the place where he learns is conducive to learning by its equipment, its comfort and its proximity to home. It accustoms the children to surrogate care, to new moral attitudes and acceptable standards of behaviour, it gives them an introduction to a great many intellectual and perceptual skills, fostering exploratory methods in play situations and develops the capacity to make decisions and solve problems. The nursery school provides invaluable assistance with speech development, and with the growth of concepts of size, number and shape. Linguistic and conceptual development are rapid in the pre-school years.

   The social functions of early childhood education relate to the provision of opportunities for peer and adult contact, opportunity for play and physical exploration, opportunity to develop good habits of health and safety, and for developing skills of communication and caring and sympathetic attitudes to each other. This is particularly important for children who come from poor or limited backgrounds or who are isolated. Diagnostic tests can be used in the nursery school to provide early evidence of difficulties, either physical or mental, so that help can be given at this crucial period when learning is so rapid. There should be close links between the nursery school and the health services and the social services.

2. Teacher Education for Early Childhood Teachers

   Teachers of young children should have the same length and quality of training as teachers in primary schools. They should be made familiar with normal child development and need to be aware of the need to stimulate play. They need to know how to teach the beginnings of basic numeracy, reading and writing skills and physical co-ordination. They should be given more knowledge of the manifestations of abnormality in childhood and be made aware of the support services available. It is also necessary for teachers of young children to learn to appreciate

the importance of home influence and environment on a child's personality and educational achievement so that she can help parents where necessary. The teacher should have a high proportion of practical experience with young children during her training so that she can relate theory to practice. She will need to have knowledge of the elements of speech development and be trained in diagnostic skills so that she can identify difficulties and seek expert help. She should be encouraged to link closely with the medical and social services. In selecting teachers for early childhood education, regard should be given to personality factors as well as to academic standards and motivation.

Teachers of pre-school children should be given training in using nursery helpers, ancillaries and other supporting staff.

3 Integration of handicapped children in early childhood education

This depends to a large extent in the degree and nature of the handicap. Some children (e.g.the deaf) require skilled early treatment which may be best given in a special school. Where the handicap is not too severe, integration may be helpful. It must only occur if the teacher of the nursery school class is willing, and the additional help to deal with the problems of handicap (e.g. immobility, incontinence, fits) is available. The school itself must have the necessary facilities. A teacher who accepts a handicapped child into her class must be able to ensure that the other children will accept and help the handicapped child and help him to make the most of his capabilities. She needs herself to have an understanding of the handicap and the way in which the child's difficulties should be handled. Social integration of handicapped children will be limited unless arrangements are made for integration outside school hours - i.e.for meeting other children to play after school and/or at weekends and on holidays.

4 Working Hours and Conditions of Service

Teachers in early childhood education should have the same hours and conditions of work as primary teachers. If children attend on a part-time basis, teachers can work for both morning and afternoon shifts, and if children go home earlier, the additional time can be used for record-keeping, making apparatus, planning activities, staff Conferences etc. Nursery schools must have adequate toilet facilities near at hand, furniture and equipment suitable for the age-group, indoor and outdoor play areas, storage space, a medical room properly equipped and a staff-room for the teachers. There must be adequate ancillary help available including nursery nurses, and a first aid helper and other ancillary helpers. There should be space for children to sleep or relax if they are tired, and a room in which mothers can be received and arrangements for meals or refreshments for children staying at school all day.

ENGLAND AND WALES: Association of Head Mistresses

The Association of Head Mistresses supports Nursery Education, believing it to have both a social and an educational function.

We believe that the training of teachers for Nursery Education should be undertaken alongside those training for other age groups (in England and Wales; it is not possible in Scotland). While we dislike any implication that Nursery teachers should be less well qualified or intelligent than those who teach other age groups, we are concerned about the possibility that 2 G.C.E.s at 'A' Level may become necessary qualifications for this training in the future. Some girls are better prepared for Nursery teaching by doing a wider range of courses than by struggling to gain 2 'A' Level G.C.E. qualifications.

While integration of handicapped children is, we believe, likely to be recommended by a current committee of enquiry, we should be careful not to carry the principle too far. A severely disturbed or psychotic child needs a special unit. There is a danger that handicapped children can lose confidence by contrasting themselves with normal children. Partial and temporary integration may be better for some. The importance of early diagnosis of handicap is stressed and it is emphasised that ideals of integration should be supported by adequate facilities, staffing, capitation and ancillary help.

Working hours and conditions for early childhood teachers should be in no way inferior to those for other teachers, and for those teaching the handicapped, periods of teaching in a normal school would be an advantage for balancing the experience of the teacher.

FINLAND: Opettajien Ammattijärjestö
Svenska Finlands Lärarförbund
Suomen Lastentarhanopettajien liitto

Early childhood activities were originally administered by school authorities, but was at an early stage transferred to the field of social authorities. After this school authorities have had no activities directed to children under compulsory school age (7 year) until a pre-school experiment for 6 year olds started in 73 in cooperation with the social authorities.

There has been kindergarten-activities since the end of last century. These activities were regulated through legislation in 1927 and have be revised through new legislation in 1973. According to the new legislation these activities have been given a stronger social character than was the case before.

The Finnish school system has during this decade been characterized by a thorough revision of the educational system. This started with the introduction of comprehensive school and is now followed up by a revision of post comprehensive school. Parallel with this goes a revision and unification of teacher training.

In legislation concerning comprehensive school, provisions were made for a possible pre-school class connected to the educational system and administered by school authorities. This has not been developed up til now, but in connection with a principal decision taken concerning the guidelines for post comprehensive education it was decided to actualise and develop early education at the same time as post-comprehensive education.

Early childhood activities are today divided into two sectors, the educationally oriented pre-school class (experiments) and the socially dominated activities designed for children from 3 years up til school age.

The aim of the reform project for the 6 year olds is to offer a favourable environment aiming at evening out differences and possible lack of impulses in their home milieu in order to give as equal a start to everybody as possible for further education.

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Opettajien Ammattijärjestö opinions concerning early childhood education

The old educational structure in Finland has been characterized by very separate forms of education administratively as well as in regard to the content of the studies. For this reason our organization does not have a very pronounced policy with regard to early childhood education.

The overall reform of the educational system has, however, created a much greater concern for what is happening in other sectors of education. There is a quite new interrelation between different parts of the educational system, which will make the OAJ clarify its position to major issues concerning early childhood education as well as post-comprehensive education. At this stage we have but very general positions to offer concerning early childbood education.

Early childhood education should be dealt with both as a pedagogical and a social matter. The older children are the more should these activities have a pedagogical character.

If school age is brought down this should not mean that existing school programmes should be introduced at an earlier stage than before. The most important task of an additional school year should be to provide children with impulses and to even out differences in school ability caused by differences in children's environment.

FRANCE : Syndicat national des instituteurs et professeurs de Collège

The Nursery Schools are the only establishments offering early childhood education. They are open to children between 2 and 6 years of age, 6 being the age from which schooling is compulsory and the age of entry to the primary school.

The nursery schools are State-maintained and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The premises are the property of the local authorities, who are responsible for their upkeep. The local authorities employ one or more female assistants, appointed on the proposal of the headmistress of the nursery school, who help in the physical care of the children and act as caretakers but do not take part in any teaching duties.

The children are usually grouped in classes according to age : the youngest, 2 to 4, the middle class, 4 to 5 and the oldest, 5 to 6.

The view of the SNI-PEGC is that admission to the nursery school must be a right open to all, and that in no other way can full equality of opportunity and a truly democratic system of education be assured. Its view, as professional organisation, is that nursery schooling is of the highest educational value. The nursery school is a real school, the starting point on the journey of discovery of knowledge and the foundation of the whole educational system.

Nothing can take its place. It is an educational establishment, not a crèche.

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION ?

Under its teacher's guidance (master or mistress, since there are 150 male teachers in nursery schools at present), suitably matched to its age, the child starts on its way to the mastery of skills and knowledge, in particular its preparation for learning how to read and write, how to reason and how to reckon, towards the capacity for judgement and self-control.

For the nursery school to play its full part, the basic conditions essential for efficient teaching must be met :
- First and foremost, the SNI-PEGC insists that the size of nursery classes should be brought down to a maximum of 25 pupils.

Through the Union's persistent efforts, the recognised maximum size of class has since 1976 been 35 pupils. (It was formerly 50, according to the regulations, but in practice 40, since Union instructions were that no more than that number should be enrolled).

- A further requirement is that for effective teaching at this level, the premises must be suitable for children of this age-group : spacious, sound-insulated, with areas for games and rest and playgrounds.

- A further necessity for effective education is that it should be continuous, integrated, globally planned, graduated and uninterrupted. The

transition between nursery school and primary school must not be a trauma for the child. Wherever possible, there should be a link-up between the top class (final year) of the nursery school and the preparatory class (first year of the primary), avoiding, however, any premature introduction to, for instance, reading and writing skills, which could be detrimental to the child.

Such a bridge between the two levels can be built up wherever a comprehensive educational team including, as well as teachers, an educational-psychological support group - school psychologist, remedial teachers, school doctor - so that the child can be under continuous observation and its needs known. In this way action can be taken to see that defects are corrected in time, so that what at first is a mere defect does not become a disability through want of attention (defective eyesight, hearing, motor capacity, etc.).

It is one of SNI-PEGC's principal demands that such teams should be brought into being everywhere without delay. At present very few schools have the benefit of the support of a psycho-educational team.

In conclusion, we re-affirm our conception of the nursery school, with its constantly broadening influence and role, the better to prepare the children in its care for their future, offering them all the best possible opportunity for full and harmonious development.

Annex

Enrolment ratio - children aged 2 to 6 in 1976

	Age at school entry			
	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Average	26.4 %	79.7 %	97 %	99.3 %
Minimum	4.8 %	46.7 %	83 %	79.6 %
Maximum	59.7 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

TEACHERS' WORKING HOURS AND SERVICE CONDITIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Working hours : 27 hours a week class-time, with the following timetable :

Monday)		
Tuesday)		
Thursday)	8.30 to 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 to 4.30 p.m.	
Friday)		
Saturday	:	8.30 to 11.30 a.m.

Service conditions

Pay : the salaries of nursery school teachers (either sex) are the same as primary school teachers, and at 1 January 1977 were approximately:

Starting pay	F 2,450 (step I)
Scale maximum	F 4,000 (step II)

for an assistant teacher.

Teaching conditions

Each teacher is responsible for a class of a normal maximum of 35 - since 1976 - pupils, the result of continuous pressure by our Syndicat (the maximum was previously 50).

Buildings and equipment vary widely, since these are provided by the local authority and depend on local resources.

Nursery schools in rural areas, where they exist, and nursery classes (one class for all children aged 2-6 in rural areas) are often poorly provided for.

The failure of the Ministry of Education to make sufficient budgetary provision (a survey by the Fédération d'Education nationale shows that about 8,000 new classes would be needed to accommodate all children of 2 to 6) has led the SNI-PEGC to issue a union instruction to all nursery teachers to refuse to enrol more than 35 pupils per class.

Extracts from the Union resolution passed at the Saint-Etienne Congress (1975)

"Congress condemns unequivocally

- the practice of distributing pupils without a teacher among the other classes of a school or arranging part-time classes as a result of no provision having been made for a sufficient pool of supply staff to be available;
- oversize classes, especially nursery classes, as an alternative to the establishment of new classes, or because classrooms are not available;
- and confirms its previous decisions rejecting all makeshift arrangements likely to be prejudicial to good teaching.

Congress demands :

- as regards class numbers :

- a reduction in the number required for the establishment of new classes in nursery schools to 35 (this has now in part been achieved) as a first step towards the ultimate aim of reducing class numbers to a maximum of 25 pupils;

- as regards teaching duties :

- relief for headteachers of nursery schools, primary schools, lower secondary schools and special schools by the progressive introduction of the proposals made by the National Committee on 16 February 1963 (relief

from class teaching duties to give time for headteacher responsibilities);

- relief from extra duties and supervision in the various types of school, by arrangements to eliminate supervision during the mid-day break (11.30 a.m. - 1.30 p.m.) in the nursery schools ...;

- the establishment of additional preipatetic supply posts so as to ensure rational and effective arrangements for the replacement of absent teachers in the pre-primary and regular schools ...".

UPGRADING OF TEACHER STATUS

"Congress solemnly re-affirms its determination to achieve the moral and material betterment of the status of teachers.

Congress declares its final objective to be the standardisation of administrative and service conditions for all teachers throughout compulsory schooling (from 2 to 16)."

The campaign for the moral and material improvement of teachers' status calls for the mobilisation of the full potential of the Syndicat National for the period March-April 1977.

Militant members are distributing widely a teachers' manifesto from which the following is an extract :

"Teachers can no longer accept a situation which is steadily deteriorating while reforms are being discussed : therefore they put their case before public opinion.

* Their conditions of service are such that the profession can no longer attract young people in spite of mounting unemployment.

* Their social position has deteriorated, their status in society whittled away with the complicity of a Government which is more concerned to favour the private schools than to meet the essential and legitimate needs of the State system of education and its teachers.

* Their salaries are out of line with their responsibilities and duties. Qualified teachers devoted to their task are the guarantee of adequate schooling for our children. The moral, professional and material upgrading of the teacher's status is essential for your sons and daughters".

Teachers are everywhere signing this petition for the upgrading of their status.

The climax of the campaign will be a great nation-wide rally on 4 May when tens of thousands of militant members will foregather.

INTEGRATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Extract from the resolution of the Saint-Etienne Congress on educational principles :

"The SNI considers that, since the priority objectives of education are to

- prevent and correct disabilities
- provide to the greatest possible extent for the integration of handicapped children

" segregation of handicapped children can be of no benefit either to them or to society".

Congress insists on the importance of continuous observation of the child and on the need to provide, from the nursery school to the end of compulsory schooling, for the prevention and correction of handicaps and for remedial teaching for all children having difficulties. To this end, Congress demands the implementation of the Circular dated 9 February 1970, so that observation and psycho-educational action can be taken from the earliest possible age and throughout schooling, with the continuous support of psycho-educational teams so as to

- prevent, detect and correct handicaps
- eliminate school failures".

Note: integration of handicapped children in early childhood education is hampered by the size of nursery classes - at present 35 - and will be facilitated if we can secure the reduction of the standard number for new classes to 25 pupils.

TEACHER TRAINING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

At present training is identical for all teachers in primary (including nursery school) education. The course is for 2 years, following the baccalauréat (higher school leaving certificate), in teacher training colleges. Entry is by competitive examination (principally a literary examination) after passing the baccalauréat.

The two years of training are spent as follows :

1st year. Practice teaching (usually, three periods of 3 weeks each) alternating with theoretical training (philosophy of education, child and adolescent psychology, subject teaching, at least half of which must be spent on French and mathematics, social anthropology, physical education, art subjects, modern language, and an optional subject).

The practice teaching periods in the first year - "observation periods" - are spent at the three principal primary school levels (preparatory,

elementary and middle) with a period of about 15 days in the nursery school.

A period in the nursery school is therefore required of all trainee teachers.

2nd year. An "in-service" practice term of three months, with the trainee taking independent charge of a class (in the first term of the school year) followed by return to the training college for further study. A final examination is taken at the end of the two-year course (CFEN).

There is therefore no specific training scheme for nursery school teachers.

THE UNION POSITION

In its draft scheme for basic schooling (from nursery class to Class 3 level), SNI-PEGC calls for unity and continuity of schooling, which implies unity in the teaching approach and in the system of training.

We maintain, therefore, that teacher training for the basic school should be planned as a unity without necessarily being uniform.

The training should provide for the change from complete generalisation at the beginning of schooling, where the child is taught by one teacher only, to a limited degree of specialisation, where the child is taught by 4 or 5 teachers in the last years of basic schooling. The Union view is that for very young children one teacher should cover the whole field of subjects.

The Union's ultimate objective is a four-year training course, with as a first step the standardisation of the present three-year training following baccalauréat for all teachers in the basic school.

The plan of a common curriculum (plus option) for two years, followed by two years of specialisation at a particular level (nursery school, elementary school, lower secondary school) or in the selected special teaching subject or subjects would offer the twofold benefit :

1. Every prospective teacher would have a thorough training in his preferred field;
2. His training would have given him the essential character development required for teaching.

Furthermore, we take the view that there should be no rigid compartmentalisation either between levels or in subject matter, and that every teacher should have the opportunity in the course of his working life for further training, to change from one level or from one group of subjects to another.

The actual content of the training should include the fundamentals of biology and psychology, to cover the evolution of the individual from birth to the end of adolescence. The background for this study - especially

the psychological aspect - should be practical observation in the classroom and outside.

All the teachers in the basic school should have training in basic subject groups :

mathematical and scientific subjects
literary subjects
modern language teaching

An option system would enable trainees to choose some as their main subjects, to suit their aptitudes and preferences.

Location of training facilities

We consider that the existing departmental training colleges should be rejuvenated as departmental centres for initial and further training and for educational research - as centres of higher education open to all aspects of life, cultural development and humanist thought.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - SOCIAL OR EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION ?

No-one contests the educational role of the nursery school, but its social function is perhaps more obvious. There is a temptation, therefore, to stress the social function at the expense of the educational role.

The SNI-PEGC is of course fully aware of the social function of the nursery school; the need to care for children both of whose parents are at work is undeniable. But the responsibility of the nursery school cannot be compared with that of reception centres such as crèches, kindergartens or play centres. Teaching, under the supervision of the teacher, is continuous throughout school time, including games, mealtimes, rest periods, individual and group activities whether spontaneous or organised. Every moment of the school day lends itself to the stimulation of the senses and the personality of the child; everything is a source of information the teacher can draw upon for education, including even the nature and duration of the "rest periods"; everything that happens in the nursery school is part of the gradual and continuing process of preparation for the skill learning that begins in the elementary classes. For the child, everything in this experience, its first contact with a society wider than the family, is an occasion for effort, and therefore education, in a setting adapted to and within his capacity. Success or failure in the future is for many children decided in their experience between 2 and 6 years of age.

For example : 57 per cent of all children have to repeat a class in the primary school, but of those who have had 4 years in the nursery school, only 40 per cent. Even one year in the nursery schoold reduces the risk of having to repeat a primary school class by 6 per cent.

Our Union's view is that the essential function of the nursery school is to give the opportunity to redress the inequalities inseparable from the child's social and cultural background. It is surely unnecessary to point

out that poor speech development or insufficient mental or motor stimulation must seriously jeopardise the later mastery of reading or arithmetic and that correction of disabilities should begin as early as possible in life.

Deeply convinced of the inestimable importance of the educational role of the nursery school, the SNI-PEGC can never accept over-emphasis on the social aspect to its detriment.

Over the past twenty years, sucessive Ministers of Education have sought to re-orientate the pre-elementary school towards a mere child-minding role. Our Union has constantly and vigorously opposed such an approach, as is clear from the resolution on educational principles passed by the last Congress :

> "On the basis of repeated scientific observation, Congress re-affirms its steadfast opposition to any substitute or caricature of the nursery school, in its working or - and especially - in the qualifications of the teachers there employed;
>
> - to any premature formal schooling or skill training prior to the preparatory class;
>
> - to any attempt to draw a dividing line between children of 2 to 4 and children of 4 to 6;
>
> - to the use of school assistants during any school time properly the responsibility of qualified teachers".

Saint-Etienne, July 1975

GERMANY : Deutscher Lehrerverband

(1) In the past, early childhood education in the Federal Republic of Germany - other than in some European countries, - has been much like family education in the traditional sense. Five years ago, about 50% of the 3 - 5 age-group had an opportunity of attending a kindergarten. Today - resulting from a considerable growth of kindergarten capacities as well as from a sinking birth-rate, an estimated 70% of this age-group find a kindergarten-place. Because of recent demographic changes, however, regional over-capacities in kindergarten-places may exist.

Up to the 60's, kindergartens often had been just nurseries with not very much of an educational approach. Recently, however, the social and educational challenges in this special field of education have been discovered and met with.

In this context four main arguments are being discussed: 1)
- equalizing individual disadvantages of all kinds, especially for physically and mentally handicapped children,
- supplementing education in small families,
- taking advantage of the special flexibility of children at this age,
- enabling mothers of younger children to participate in public and professional activities.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, this field of education is called "Elementary Education". It comprises all "institutions for family-supplementing education between the age of 3 and the beginning of compulsory school". 2)

In kindergarten the 3 - and 4-years-old are catered and furthered, while the education of the 5-year-old takes place partly in kindergarten and partly in elementary classes (this varies from state to state). Elementary (or pre-school) classes, however, belong to the primary field of education.

The authors of "Bildungsgesamtplan" expected that in 1980 30 - 50% of the 5-years-old would attend elementary classes. This tendency, however, has slowed down considerably, since experiments have shown that elementary classes do not necessarily lead to continuous learning in the primary field. At present, authorities show no intention to advance compulsory school age.

As a result from qualified training for state-examined educators, kindergartens put more and more stress on educational and socially compensatory work to facilitate easier transition to primary education.

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1) From: Deutscher Bildungsrat, On Establishing a Model Programme for Development of Curricula in Elementary Education, 1973.

2) From: "Bildungsgesamtplan, Vol. 1", published by Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung, 1973.

This work should, however, not anticipate primary school studies, but rather create and promote pre-requisites for primary education, like the abilities of watching, comparing, evaluating of communicating, social behaviour, self-reliance.

In this sense early childhood education has a growing social and educational importance.

(2) Work in elementary education is mainly done by state-examined "educators". Usually they have no tertiary education, but vocational training in the field of upper secondary education. An educator's qualification includes:

- Secondary education up to grade 10 (16 years)
- 2 years in a special school for socio-pedagogics
- 1 year of practical training

(conditions vary slightly between states).

Elementary classes are taught by primary teachers and socio-pedagogists.

(3) Handicapped children are furthered according to their individual handicaps and to local/regional needs. In some model experiments they are taught together with normal children for new compensatory methods. Increasingly new methods for the promotion of handicapped children are under probation.

(4) In 1975, the teacher-pupil ratio in the elementary field of education was supposed to be 1 : 18, due to the sinking birth-rate 3), as an average in the Federal Republic of Germany, but varying from state to state. Further improvement in the teacher-pupil ratio is expected.

Annual salary :	ca 22.000 DM
Work load :	40 hours per week
Status :	Civil worker (Angestellter)

(5) DL welcomes all efforts to promote and intensify elementary education because of its vital role in the lives of young children, their expectancies in school-life, and their equalities of changes. Compensation in elementary education can do much more for disadvantaged children than any way of compensation in primary or secondary education.

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3) Cf. Bildungsgesamtplan

In April 1975, the Government trained a number of women in a para-military labour corps to run Kindergartens which had just been set up. As theyform part of the Armed Forces, they cannot join a trade union. These number about 80.

Another 150 females were employed on a temporary basis as kindergarten assistants. Their employment is on a temporary basis and may be terminated at the discretion of the Government. In fact, their employment is terminated automatically when schools close down for the summer holidays. These latter appointees can join a trade union and in fact the Malta Union of Teachers has majority membership.

Their pay is lower than the Government Minimum Wage and they are not entitled to summer holidays. They undertake compulsory mid-day supervision and without remuneration.

At present there are 59 Kindergarten Centres catering for 3,168 children. Each class has an average of 15 children.

The Malta Union of Teachers is at present engaged in discussions with Government to ameliorate the salaries, working hours and working conditions of Kindergarten Assistants.

* * * * * * * * * *

Policy Statement on Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education should be an important part of every young child's early experience. It should be available to all children, no matter what their social or educational background.

They should have an opportunity for spending part of their day in an environment specially designed for small children where they can talk to and play with other children of their own age and where they can partake of activities which are not conditioned by the needs of the adult world.

The purpose of these schools is not to look after children whose parents are at work. It is to provide early childhood education.

A person's whole intellectual life is sharply conditioned by his early experience in forming new ideas and learning to speak about them. The lives of many young children are very deficient in this respect. Properly trained teachers in a properly equipped school provide such children with an initiation to schooling. Moreover early childhood education helps to promote the provision of equal educational opportunities for all.

Intending teachers of early childhood education should be given the same training as other teachers. They cannot qualify in any easier, simpler or shorter way. During their training period they should do most of their practical work in schools and classes catering for early childhood education.

Therefore, such teachers should have the same working hours and working conditions as other qualified teachers teaching in any part of the education system.

SCOTLAND : The Educational Institute of Scotland

Early childhood education in Scotland as in the rest of the UK spans a continuum extending from playcentres and day nurseries (which are the concern mainly of social workers and which housewives often help to man on a volunteer basis) at one end and nursery schoolds and classes staffed by qualified teachers at the other end. The concern of the Institute is solely with the latter.

While recognising that playgroups etc, may have a useful role to play, it considers that nursery education either in separate nursery schools or in nursery classes attached to primary schools should be provided for all children of pre-school age whose parents wish them to have it and that it should be provided in schools and classes staffed by appropriately qualified teachers. The Government committed itself in 1972 to such a policy but economic stringency has now compelled it to suspend the growth of nursery education which was intended to provide for 40 per cent of the age group by 1977-78 and for all children whose parents wished them to have nursery education by the early 1980s. The nursery building programme has now been brought to a halt except perhaps in areas of social deprivation which were always intended to be given priority and where some authorities are still trying to improve on the existing provision.

Our nursery schools and classes are staffed by qualified teachers, i.e. teachers registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. They usually hold an additional qualification in nursery and/or infant teaching methods which can be obtained by means of in-service training on completion of their basic teaching qualification which is one for the primary school.

The admission of handicapped children to nursery schools may be done at the request of or in consultation with social work departments which the Institute recognises as having a part to play in the referral to nursery schools of handicapped children as well as children from under-privileged neighbourhoods. The Institute insists however that the admission of handicapped children should be at the discretion of the head teacher of the nursery school so that a reasonable balance can be maintained in nursery classes as between handicapped and normal children.

The working day of nursery teachers is generally speaking the same as that of primary teachers. It is common practice, however, for nursery schools to be organised on the basis of part-day rather than full-day attendance so that one group of children may attend in the morning and another in the afternoon. Nursery teachers are paid on the same salary scale as primary school teachers. The staffing ratio recommended by the Government department responsible for education, i.e. the Scottish Education Department is one adult to 10 children, the adults consisting

of teachers and nursery nurses in accordance with the following table :

Number of places	Number of teachers		
	Head teacher with specialist nursery qualification	Assistant teachers not necessarily with specialist qualification	Number of nursery nurses
20	1	-	1
30	1	-	2
40	1	-	3
50	1	1	3
60	1	1	4
70	1	1	5
80	1	1	6

The Institute accepts this staffing ratio except that in schools with 70 or 80 places (the maximum size recommended for a nursery school by the SED is one with 80 places) the Institute considers that the head teacher should have more time free of teaching duties for administrative work than the recommended staffing complements for schools of this size would allow. It has accordingly recommended that a school with 70 places should have a head teacher, two assistant teachers and four nursery nurses (instead of one assistant teacher and five nursery nurses as recommended by the Department) and that a school with 80 places should have, in addition to the head teacher, three assistant teachers and five nursery nurses instead of one assistant teacher and six nursery nurses as recommended by the Department.

SPAIN: Federación de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de la U.G.T.

(1) The nursery schools

The nursery school has a double objective: first, to provide equal opportunity, secondly, to enable both parents to join the work force.

Therefore there must be created as many such centers as necessary to cover people's actual needs.

(2) One single teaching body, with adequate pedagogical, scientific and technical training

Recognition of the labour character of teachers' activity, with sufficient remuneration and consequent right to affiliate to a union, to demonstrate, to strike, and to security of employment.

Establish democratic ways of recruiting teachers in order to overcome the bureaucratic and repressive system against any opposition and all kinds of arbitrary authorities, so as to avoid political, syndical or religious discrimination.

The recognition of freedom in teaching as the only way to assure rational and scientific content in education, above any kind of ideological involvement.

Further education should be organised at all levels for teachers.

Time should be included in the working hours for planning and preparing lessons, seminars, homework correction and research.

The teacher's work will be critically evaluated by his colleagues and by his pupils.

(3) Special education

Special education has at present a conservative function for maintaining the present structure of the school as an institution. When a child does not behave according to the institution's views, he will be considered as a pathological case or retarded. By putting the problem on the child, it will avoid any questioning of the institution. Special education integrates children into a repressive system.

We suggest that pupils' problems be solved within the frame of the institution and by questioning and changing it. Special education should be reserved only for very important cases of disability which do not allow an integration into the regular educational system. It is therefore absolutely necessary that a psycho-educational service be created within the school center with adequate teaching courses for handicapped children. Appropriate centers should also be set up to take care of very handicapped children.

	1.10.76			1.1.77			1.9.77		
	Basic Salary	Supplement	Total	Basic Salary	Supplement	Total	Basic Salary	Supplement	Total
Head-Master									
a.....	19030	5070	24100	19030	8470	27500	19030	11070	30100
b.....	8156	--	8156	8156	--	8156	8156	--	8156
Assistant Head-Master									
a.....	19030	5070	24100	19030	8470	27500	19030	11070	30100
b.....	7752	--	7552	7552	--	7552	7552	--	7552
Profesor Titular	19030	5070	24100	19030	8470	27500	19030	11070	30100

The figures shown in the above tables are indicated in pts (pesetas).

Under the words 'headmaster'and 'assistant headmaster' appear the letters 'a' and 'b' to indicate the amount for each professional category of teachers. 'b' is the supplement for the position of headmaster and assistant headmaster.

We think that we pointed out clearly the bad situation in which the Government maintains pre-school education. On the one hand, the Government leaves pre-school education completely to private groups, and on the other hand they encourage the devaluation of the legal qualifications they delivered themselves by giving low salaries to pre-school teachers, while it is formally required that those teachers in State schools have further special training and special examinations.

Information given by the "Federación de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de la Union General de Trabajadores de España" about the situation of pre-school education in their country.
Excerpt.

As information, we quote the following two items from documents not prepared by our own organisation, in order to give a more objective point of view.

The first one is from a well known professional magazine entitled : "Escuela Española" No. 2.349, September 15, 1976, first day of the present school year. It is said in the editorial: "1. The alarming lack of nurseries, especially in big cities, represents a serious educational and economic problem for many families, especially for the working class. The family must choose between two alternatives. The possibilities for a good education are limited, or they have to renounce an important part of the family income provided by women working. The apathy of the Ministry of Education and Science and by Administration as a whole, as far as this problem is concerned, causes real speculation from many private individuals or agencies who open nurseries without adequate sanitary and pedagogical conditions. In addition, the families have to pay very high fees. Here appears the first selective barrier in the educational system".

We think that his paragraph does not need further comment.

The second point we wish to present is the "Resolution from the Department of Labour to adopt the Trade Union Collective Agreement (facist trade unions) concerning non-official teaching centers at the inter-provincial level". This was stated in the official Bulletin of December 2, 1976. As can be seen in the table below, reproduced from this Resolution, there is a real discrepancy between the salary of a general education teacher and that of a pre-school teacher. However, both have the same professional title.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

	1.10.76			1.1.77			1.9.77		
	Basic Salary	Supplement	Total	Basic Salary	Supplement	Total	Basic Salary	Supplement	Total
Head-Master									
a.....	19030	5070	24100	19030	6770	25800	19030	8970	28000
b.....	8156	--	8156	8156	--	8156	8156	--	8156
Assistant Head-Master									
a.....	19030	5070	24100	19030	6770	25800	19030	8970	28000
b.....	7752	--	7552	7552	--	7552	7552	--	7552
Profesor Titular	19030	5070	24100	19030	6770	25800	19030	8970	28000

(4) Working hours and conditions for pre-school teachers

Since the programme of the Federation of Teachers of the U.G.T. is to create one teaching body, all the teachers should receive the same titles but with specific training according to the level of education and the scientific matters they wish to teach, so we can deduct that the working hours and conditions will be more or less the same for all teachers.

SWEDEN : Svenska Facklärarförbundet
Sveriges Lärarförbund

Early childhood education - a social or educational function?

A new foundation for the pedagogic work in the pre-school [x] was laid by BU (Barnstugeutredningen - The Commission on Child Centres). BU has tried to integrate psychoanalysis, primarily the theories of Erik H. Erikson, and the cognitive theories of J. Piaget. BU stated that the child's development is characterized by a process of continual interplay between maturation and learning. Three mutually interdependent "fields of competency" are central factors for the child's development. They are: ego comprehension, conceptual formation and communication.

However, the child's development within these fields can never exist in a vacuum. It must always be related to the society in which the child lives. To develop one's ego comprehension, conceptual formation and communication is to learn how to deal better with reality in the society.

Consequently the answer to the question of the headline is that early childhood education in Sweden is considered to be a social and educational function - simultaneously.

According to SFLs point of view, developing and learning is basically the same process.

Teacher education for early childhood teachers

The pre-school teacher education has been changed considerably lately. According to the ideas put forward by BU the contents are divided into three "blocks": communication, orientation about the world around you, and pedagogics. The various subjects within the blocks and between the blocks should be integrated as the studies are to be organized in projects. The basis of the studies should be real problems in connection with the future profession. To facilitate that, the students spend part of the course visiting pre-schools and working with children. Theory and practice should be integrated. The future pre-school teachers are being trained to function as a working team and how to practise the methodology of "dialogue pedagogics".

The duration of the course is four semesters. It is at present based on the 9 year comprehensive school and work experience with children. From July 1977, however, the pre-school teacher education is incorporated in the university organization. Consequently, the course is going to be

x) The expression "pre-school" is now used as a uniform label for the activities previously provided by day nurseries and nursery schools.

based on the same principles as university courses on the whole; the main way is to have passed upper secondary school.

SFL is rather pleased with the present pre-school teacher education. Our main point of view is that we want to make it longer - five semesters instead of four.

The main problem is that to be employed as a pre-school teacher it is not necessary to have a pre-school teacher education. Contrary to the rest of the school system any person could be employed by the community. It should also be noted that there is another category of pedagogic staff (nursery - nurse) working in the pre-school and that there are several short courses which are not satisfactory according to SFLs opinion.

Integration of handicapped children in early childhood education

Generally there is a striving in Sweden to try to integrate the handicapped with all the activities in society. This is considered to be especially important in the case of small children. Of course the extent of integration is a matter of resources - economical and human.

From the 1st of January a new law (Barnomsorgslagen - the Act of Child Care) came into effect. It states the importance of opening the municipal pre-schools to handicapped children. A committee (Barnomsorgs-gruppen - the Committee of Child Care) has recently put forward a report with suggestions of how to integrate the handicapped children to the greatest possible extent with other children attending pre-school.

At present the county council is responsible for the care of handicapped children. The county council operates among other things institutions for mentally retarded children and is also responsible for the medical care. According to Barnomsorgsgruppens suggestions the responsibility for the handicapped children should be a mutual responsibility between the community and the county council.

SFLs opinion of these suggestions is positive. We have, however, strongly stressed the importance of enough resources.

Working hours and working conditions for early childhood teachers

Contrary to the teachers employed by the State, the pre-school teachers who are employed by the community have fixed working hours. The working hours are at present 40 hours/week. The teachers of the part-time pre-school work 42 weeks/year and the teachers of the full-time pre-school have 4 - 5 weeks holiday/year.

The pre-school teachers have the lowest salary of all categories of teachers. (About 500 - 2 000 sw Cr less). Naturally it is a very important goal for SFL to remove these unmotivated differences of salary.

Another important goal is to bind the number of employed on each division of the pre-school to regulations in the law. As it is now, the number of employed is far too small in proportion to the number of children. This is one of the main problems of the pre-school.

SFL also strives to draw up an agreement which states that the pre-school teachers have time to do some work, apart from the time working with the children; preparing, planning, after-work etc.

SWITZERLAND : Société pédagogique de la Suisse romande

There are obvious reasons why the period that precedes compulsory education must be provided for. Whatever one can try to do at the level of compulsory education implies that one takes as a base what has been done before, from birth to six years of age. Here, however, we shall consider only the two years that precede the beginning of compulsory education, that concern children aged 4 to 6 years. This does not mean that one should disregard the period from birth to 4 years of age and which must be considered, first by the families and then by the public authorities. The responsibility of the latter is particularly great today when there is a better awareness of the importance of early childhood and of society's duty to give it the utmost attention. That is now a continuing task for those responsible for public education, a task that must be undertaken everywhere, in each canton, in each municipality.

The psychological reasons

If the period from birth to age 4 seems crucial for the formation of the child's aptitudes and personality, during the ensuing period - from age 4 to 6 - his development continues to be very rapid and, because of that fact, requires particularly attentive care. The most recent psychological data show that this development takes place through a two-fold process: maturation and learning. The child grows by reason of his innate forces which, by manifesting themselves, show the part that biological factors play in his development. But the individual cannot develop unless he is active; more precisely, external agents must stimulate activity on his part. If they are present at the right moment, constructive activities take place and maturation proceeds satisfactorily; if they are absent, maturation is either halted or delayed, with adverse effects. The environment acts as a stimulus, being composed not only of objects of all kinds, but also of other children and of intelligent adults. The family may have constituted such an environment in the past, but less so today, for two reasons. Firstly, it offers an environment that is sometimes less stimulating for the child than used to be the case and most often, is less well endowed in relations between individuals and between generations. Secondly, the requirements of the present-day world are such that the stimuli for early human activities must be more abundant and more intense than in the past so that the maturation of abilities can itself be richer and better assured. As a result, even the best-equipped family may not be able to furnish the most favourable environment that children need.

The child's development proceeds by stages - those identified by Piaget - and at each of those stages the child must receive the appropriate stimulus to master and move beyond it. This implies that children should have near them competent persons who can detect sensitive periods and meet the relevant needs. Such close attention to the development of the individual child should also allow the timely detection of any disturbances in regard to physical sensory-motor, intellectual or emotional development. In this respect, the nursery school will have the responsibility of offering specific aid to problem children and such aid, coming at the right moment, will be conducive to the success of remedial or therapeutic education.

The social reasons

If, as we know, the social and cultural environment in which the child evolves plays an essential role in his development and this role is particularly important during early childhood, it follows as a matter of social justice that from that time onwards everything must be done to secure the opportunities for his optimum fulfilment. This is where the nursery school can play a remedial role by providing for the less well endowed the aid that is their right. Indeed, the inequalities that can affect certain children are not merely of a social or cultural character; there are others that must also be taken into account, such as those in regard to habitat (town or country). The nursery school is thus a necessity everywhere, in city suburbs as well as in mountain villages.

The relatively recent evolution of the status of women must also be taken into consideration. Indeed, more and more women are tending to add a career activity to their traditional responsibilities as housewives. Being less available to attend to her home duties as first teacher, the working mother needs the assistance of educational specialists in that regard.

Status of the nursery school

For a long time already, day-care centres and kindergartens have been taking in young children in certain regions. Present opinion is that such institutions should be placedon a formal basis wherever that is not yet the case.

The nursery school should be open to all children, from all environments and all regions of the country, and from age 4 onwards.

Nursery school attendance should, of course, be free of charge.

In this way, the nursery schoold would become compulsory for the State while being optional for the parents. This arrangement would confirm that the authorities intend to leave with the family the widest prerogatives in regard to education. The authorities make no claim to take the family's place but, rather, to collaborate with the family and furnish all the aid it is entitled to expect. The school can help parents to achieve an increasing awareness of their educational responsibilities, and can give them useful advice. In this way, the school and the family, acting in concert, will each be able to carry out their specific roles with increasing effectiveness.

Lastly, one may wonder whether the designation "nursery school" (in French, Ecole enfantine) is really the best one. One might have preferred "kindergarten", for instance. The reason why "nursery school" was selected is because it was feared that "kindergarten" might still have a somewhat negative connotation, despite the fact that in a number of places kindergartens are being established that are extremely well equipped and are directed by highly qualified staff.

The designation "nursery school" is not entirely satisfactory either. In any case, it is important that the idea should not develop that children attending such an establishment will be subjected to excessively early school training that would be harmful to them.

The teachers

As children grow older, the psychological gap between them and their teachers becomes less significant. It is in his early years that the child is farthest away from adults and that the risks of errors and of lack of understanding in education are greatest. A high level of psychological and pedagogical preparation, with periodic refresher courses, is therefore important for everyone with responsibility for educating children in nursery school. It is appropriate to re-affirm here that the qualifications required of young children's educators are such as to preclude any arrangement of teaching functions on the basis of hierarchy, for example in relation to teaching levels.

Objectives of the nursery school in the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland

The nursery school:

- ensures a smooth transition between the family environment and the school environment and prepares the way for the child's integration in society;
- promotes the fulfilment and development of each child;
- backs up the family in children's education.

It carries out this task:

- by creating a favourable specific environment;
- by training

  sensory perception and psychomotricity

  means of expression

  mental functions that prepare for future acquirements.

The nursery school affords a first opportunity to detect any deficiencies to which the child may be subject.

The method is based on in-depth motivations for the child.

His need to act is channelled towards creative and investigation activities aimed at training his innate inquisitiveness by permitting experimentation, through trial and error. By her comments and discreet suggestions, the teacher encourages the child and helps him in his discoveries; she guides him without ever forcing him forward, but on the contrary while respecting the stages of normal maturation.

The interest generated in a child by a stimulating environment and

by his possibilities for choosing his occupations will lead him to spontaneous effort, to perseverance in action, to personal discipline.

Through games which are a natural mode of activity the child can express himself, put his abilities to use, develop his independence, and integrate himself in the life of the community.

In a nursery school class, individual activity alternates smoothly with activities by groups or by the entire class.

SWITZERLAND : Schweizerischer Lehrerverein

1. Early Childhood Education - a social or educational function?

Education always has various dimensions and functions :

- it contributes to the process of becoming a person : humanization, finding sense in one's relations vis-à-vis Nature, environment and culture (including transcendance), individuation ;

- it brings about a form of socialization and does this :

  a) by coerced ajustment to)existing relationships
  b) by perspicacious integration in)including the prevailing)norms and structures

  c) by fostering critical thought and strengthening the will to change socio-cultural conditions and relationships

  d) by developing the capacity to participate in social and cultural life;

- to contribute to the economic usefulness and integrability of the person by providing individual qualifications (knowledge, skills, work attitudes such as carefulness, reliability, perseverance, etc.). On the basis of his acquired specific qualifications (as demanded by the industrial and post-industrial society, based as it is on the division of labour), the individual is able to assume a meaningful (and efficient) role in one of the sectors of the economy (agriculture, manual trades and industry, services including teaching, research, cultural creative activity). In all social systems (even the theoretically "classless" systems) the various functions (vocations) have different status values which depend on their level of prerequisite qualifications and specialized knowledge as well as on the extent of decision-making authority and responsibility and which are expressed inter alia by differentiated compensation and formal or informal privileges (freely accorded by members of society). Society as a whole and a liberal form of government cannot, however, lastingly survive unless training and education develop aptitudes and serve the common weal (the res publica). These premises with regard to man and society are also valid in considering the problem of early childhood education.

The question whether the task of early childhood education is social or educational is wrongly formulated. At best, one could ask which of the two inextricably interfused roles is more decisive and, above all, for whom the educational effect of early childhood education is more productive and hence also of greater social significance. Early childhood education offers children of pre-school age a "structured field of activity and learning" - structured in accordance with certain (still to be defined) considerations - by appropriately cultivating their aptitudes and developing their social behaviour and their capacities for linguistic and creative expression in particular.

This means that the educational and social function of early childhood education benefits, in the first place, those children who lack suitable motivation at home and who grow up in undersized social groups (single children, children of small families, geographical isolation, etc.). Today there is no longer any doubt that the stimuli of the first years of life are very important but that it would be a mistake systimatically to anticipate what is learned at school. Early childhood education must have objectives that are soundly based as regards anthropology and development psychology and must have its own child-oriented methodology.

2. Teacher Education for Childhood Teachers

There are big differences in the training of early childhood teachers in Switzerland owing to the federal structure of the educational system. As a rule (for example, in German-speaking Switzerland), eleven years of schooling are followed by a three-year phase of professional training. Intensive use is made of practical work and an entrance requirement is considerable experience in the field of the trainee's future profession : work in families with small children, activity in a children's home, etc. Professional training consists of three subjects areas :

Theoretical subjects : Psychology, pedagogy, sociology, methodology, vocational science, hygiene

General education subjects : German, foreign language, natural science

Practical subjects : Drawing, manual work (handicrafts, do-it-yourself), singing (including theory), instruction in playing musical instruments, rythmics, gymnastics and sports and practical Kindergarten work.

Since co-operation with parents will be important in professional activity, questions of adult education and andragogy (dealing with adults) must also be studied. Obviously, in the course of professional training (and follow-up training) there must also be a deveopment of diagnostic skills (early identification of mentally handicapped children, children with speech defects or behavioural problems).

3. Integration of handicapped children in Early Childhood Education

This should not be treated as a sociological question to be decided ideologically. The essential criterion is what is better for the child. In our view, it is correct if the predominant tendency is towards integration instead of separation. This however calls for additional training of the teachers or the assistance of specialized staff.

4. Working hours and conditions for Early Childhood Teachers

The following standards prevail in Switzerland :

Working week of 20-25 hours, consisting of 4-5 hours a day (including Saturday mornings); two free afternoons a week. Considering the preparatory work the teacher must do even at this level of education, the indispensable follow-up training and the contacts with parents, the total workload would be about 30-35 hours a week. This is certainly less than needed by teachers of other levels for conscientious fulfilment of their duty. There is consequently also a definite salary gap (which varies greatly from canton to canton : Kindergarten teachers in the City of Zürich earn more than a primary school teacher in a mountain canton such as the Grisons!)

The number of children in Kindergartens varies between 15 and 35. Where the number is large, the teaching is done in groups and as a result:

a) the children get less teaching time or
b) the teacher takes on a bigger workload.

Vacations are those provided for in the public school regulations. Graduates of institutions recognized by the Swiss Kindergarten Teachers' Association may, as a rule, take up a post anywhere (given comparable standards of training) but owing to the over-supply of teachers, preference is given by the cantons to graduates of their own training institutions.

DRAFT

Recommendation on early childhood education - the social and educational role of early childhood education

1. The training of children below primary school age is a part of the work of social education along with the full education of the whole individual personality. Early childhood education may also act as a means of removing handicaps of a socio-cultural nature.

2. There exists also a need for caring for children whose parents work. This aspect cannot, however, be considered as the main goal of early childhood education.

3. The need for expanded early childhood education is still great in most countries. The starting age should be lowered and new groups of children be given the opportunity to enter this phase of education.

4. Early childhood education should not only prepare children for entry into the primary schoold by beginning formal instruction. The aim should be to develop the child's whole personality, including the mental, physical , aesthetic and emotional facets.

5. This level of education is not to be limited to urban areas but should be equally available to children in rural areas. There are some important difficulties, however, in gathering children from rural areas into teaching centres, especially for the very young child. Nonetheless the basic and educational rights of these children have to be considered.

6. The institutions for social care for young children are also giving the children educational experience, even if not organized or planned. These institutions should also be under the supervision of the educational authorities, parallel with social affairs.

Integration of handicapped children in early childhood education

7. The degree and nature of handicaps and maladjustments can be divided into three categories: a) congenital deficiencies (physical, hearing, visual, perceptive, etc, b) mental retardation and c) deprivation due to under-privileged family and socio-cultural backgrounds.

8. Segregation should be avoided when at all possible. All children must learn to live with others, to integrate, but this is particularly important when a child is in any way "different".

9. An early identification of handicaps and preventive action are helped above all by good working conditions in early childhood education:

a) There should be a pedagogical team composed of representatives from medical care, social work and education, which would work together with the class teacher in continual observation of the children.

The class teacher should continue to play the central role in this team vis-à-vis the child, and should serve as the necessary link between the team and parents.

b) There should be sufficient staff to ensure positive educational action.

c) Specialists should have access to the equipment they need to work effectively.

d) Governments should face up to their responsibilities and provide the necessary funds.

e) The whole pedagogical team should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

10. Appropriate structure should be set up as soon as possible to ensure that efforts to prevent, identify and remedy handicaps are as effective as possible, thus minimising future difficulties in schooling.

The training of early childhood teachers

11. There are gaps in the present training of teachers in most countries. It must be stressed that there is a need for the same type of pedagogical training from pre-school, the beginning of which may vary from country to country, to upper secondary level, to promote continuity in the educational system. In the interest of the child's development, a break in the education process is to be avoided at all costs to prevent failure of traumatic experiences.

12. The same criterai for entry to this type of teacher education should be applied as for all other levels of teaching. The academic standard should be the one required for university entrance. Intellectually early childhood education is as demanding as any other phase of education. An interest in and liking for children are essential as is some informal experience of working with and amongst children.

13. It follows that the quality and the length of the course must be the same for early childhood education as for all other teachers in the country; the training must be unified, and as long as possible, in a teacher training institution of university level.

14. Early in the training course the student should have practical experience of working with children without the full responsibilities of a teacher. The student during the course need to be helped by skilled counselling to discover their own attitudes and values; and to ensure that they become open-minded, flexible in their attitudes and ready to modify them to adapt to changing situations.

15. The early childhood teacher stimulates the development of the child and with the help of a team working under his or her responsibility. The team includes parents, nursery nurses; other ancillary helpers in school may include personnel of the medical and social services. Training in team management is an important element in the training process. Particular attention should also be given to building up a relationship with parents and colleagues and other adults. This is important because the team and especially the teacher expand the child's experience into the wider world.

16. The student must be made aware of the general problems of immigrant children as regards their culture, language and religion. The specific requirements of particular groups are better met through in-service courses. The training should include sociology as well as knowledge of the social context of the parents and the children.

17. The early detection of physical handicaps and other learning difficulties requires profound knowledge and special observational skill which the student teachers must learn during their initial training.

They should be:

a) capable of skilled and effective child observations;

b) able to identify defects and advise remedial action before they become more serious;

c) able to evaluate the problem child in the school situation in an overall way;

d) able to advise parents and persuade them of the advantages of educational and therapeutic action.

This aspect of training should be an on-going process, continuing throughout the teacher's career with in-service training and refresher courses.

18. In order to have a balanced training, theoretical studies and practical studies should have equal importance.

19. The teacher must develop a variety of creative activities, including music rhythm, mime, psycho-drama, the use of the body for expression, painting, and all manual creative skills. Physical education has an important role in this training since physical co-ordination is the basis of early

childhood education. These concepts can only be transmitted from the teacher to the taught if the teacher has successful experience of all these situations.

20. A common element in the training of both pre-school and other teachers should be included in order to familiarise them with the children's developemnt through different stages and to avoid a too early commitment to early childhood education. Especially important for the early childhood teachers are well-established links with the teachers in primary education and vice versa.

21. In-service training is necessary to respond to the evolution of the school, the teacher and the pupil. It must be stressed that in-service training cannot be regarded as a substitute for the best possible initial training. A teacher of a different teaching level who wishes to teach in pre-school must acquire a suitable training for this level.

22. In-service training is also essential for teacher educators. It should be based on practical school experience and contemporary research which is mainly school-based, in order to keep the knowledge of the teacher educator up-to-date, especially as concerns the teaching level for which they are preparing the student teacher. Certain courses should be organised jointly for teacher educators and teachers.

Conditions of service and salaries

23. There should be no difference in salaries between early childhood teachers and teachers at other levels. The conditions of service should also be the same as for teachers in primary and secondary education. With a teacher education of equal length, leading to a qualification of equal status, there can be no justification for different conditions of service or salaries.

24. The children in early childhood education should have good opportunities for close contact with adults. This only possible when the group of children is small enough. The size of the class in early childhood education should not in any case be greater than in primary school. The present situation with teacher unemployment gives the authorities an opportunity to lower class size.

25. The early childhood teacher should have sufficient time to carry out his or her responsibility for teaching. In every class at this level there should therefore be no fewer than two adults, one teacher and one trained assistant.

26. Children in early childhood education have a special need for equipment and facilities. Early childhood teachers should therefore be given a great deal of freedom for buying the equipment that they consider as necessary and as suits their methods. It is very important that enough space inside as well as outside should be available for the children at this level of education. The children should have facilities of their own, for example, water in the classroom, special toilet and easy access to a garden or a playground.

27. if possible, the early childhood class in the year before primary education should be situated in or near a primary school, in order to have a continuous process of education.

28. The early childhood teacher has important tasks outside class hours - préparation and follow-up work, staff conferences, contacts with parents, administrative work and courses of in-service training. There should be set aside additional time for this type of non-teaching activity so that the teachers at this level will be able to solve all problems of a non-teaching character and thus give the children a decent education.

"SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN EUROPE"

PROGRAM

Tuesday, April 19

Arrival of the participants

Evening

Wednesday, April 20

9.00 Opening of the Seminar
- representative of the host committee
- the WCOTP Secretary General
- the representative of the Council of Europe

9.30 General guidelines for the group work
- comments and questions

10.00 Division into two groups

I Early childhood education - a social or educational function
Basic discussion

II The teacher education for early childhood teachers
Basic discussion

12.00 Lunch

14.30 Working groups continue, group I and II

16.00 III Integration of handicapped children in early childhood education
Basic discussion

IV Working hours and working conditions for early childhood teachers
Basic discussion

18.00 Working groups adjourn

Thursday, April 21

9.00 Working groups continue, group I and II for text revisions

12.00 Lunch

14.30 Working groups continue, group III and IV for text revisions

18.00 Working groups adjourn

Friday, April 22

9.00 "Social and educational aspects of early childhood education".
Mlle. Brigitte Fillon, Syndicat National des Instituteurs
et Professeur de Collège, France
Questions and comments

10.50 "Teacher education for early childhood teachers".
Miss Kari Lie, Norsk Laererlag, Norway.
Questions and comments

12.00 Lunch

14.30 Visit to schools in Pau

17.00 Discussion on the country reports

18.00 The plenary meeting adjourns

Saturday, April 23

9.00 Plenary meeting of the Seminar
Draft recommendation

12.00 Lunch

14.30 Plenary meeting continues

17.00 Closing of the seminar

Evening Farewell dinner offered by the French host organizations

Sunday, April 24

All day excursion through Béarn and Pays Basque to Saint Jean Pied de Port near the Spanish border. Lunch en route. Possibility to watch a game of "pelote basque".

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